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histori av englis stress vauels

A Graphic history . . of .
English stressed vowels

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A*Graphic history . . of . English stressed vowels*

GEORGE S. McCUE⁶

FOREWORD

This handbook is intended for those who through love of linguistics are eager to learn, or through force of circumstances are obliged to learn, the development of English vowels in accented syllables. It is designed for students of Middle English, Old English, or Gothic, as well as for teachers of courses in the history of the English language. He who learns by eye should be greatly helped by the diagrams.

In linguistics, to be sure, the eye can give only limited help; language should be heard rather than seen. For that reason, all vowels are recorded in phonetic symbols. A broad system of transcription has been employed, because the precise nature of early pronunciation is beyond conjecture.

Pruning was necessary to keep the family trees of these vowels within bounds. Excisions include late Germanic cognates, importations from Scandinavian and French, and special East Midland contributions.

A Graphic History should be used in connection with a good grammar. Further explication can be found in the works of Brugmann, Buck, Hirt, Jespersen, Wright, and Wyld.

GEORGE S. McCUE
The Colorado College

ALAN SWALLOW, Publisher

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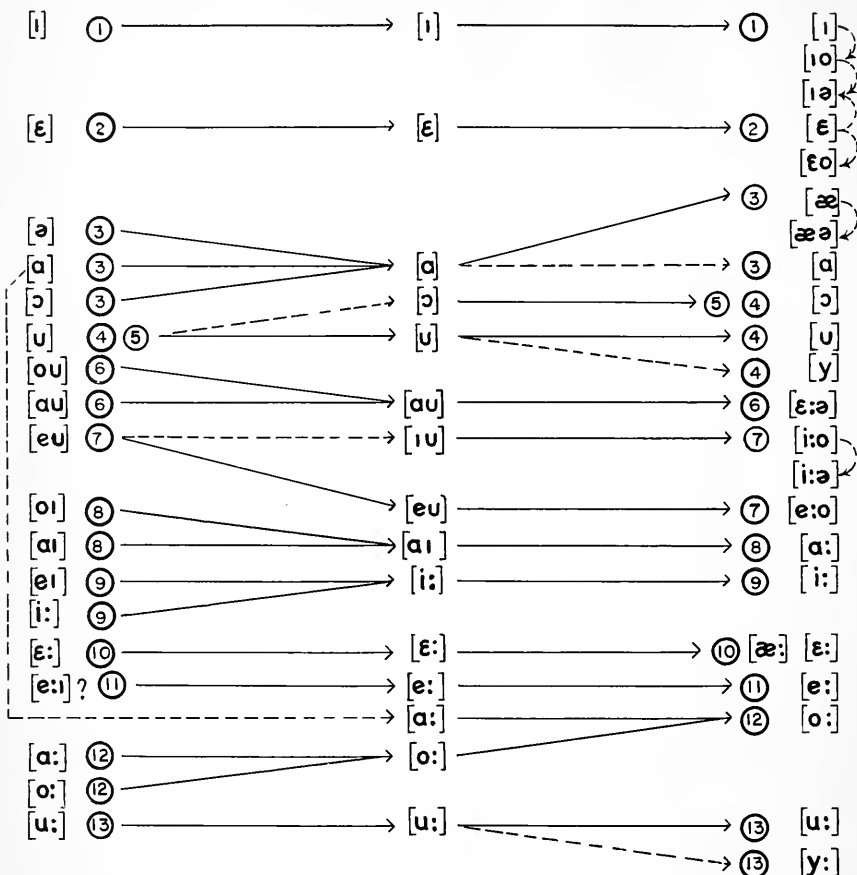
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SUMMARY OF IE-OE VOWEL CHANGES

IE had these vowels and diphthongs:

They appear as these sounds in PG:

They appear in OE as these sounds:



KEY Main development —————→
 Development under special conditions - - - - -→
 ○ Plate number

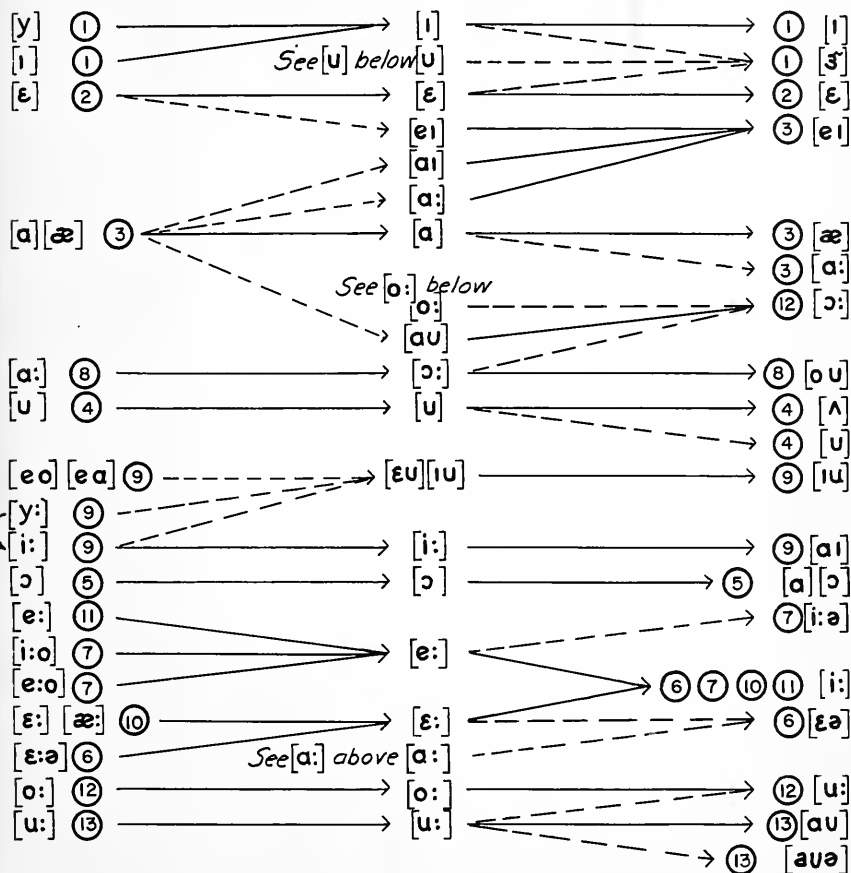
SUMMARY OF OE-NE VOWEL CHANGES

Note: Quantitative changes (like [i:] > [i]) are not recorded here

OE had these vowels and diphthongs:

They appear as these sounds in **ME**:

They appear in **NE** as these sounds:



KEY Main development —————→
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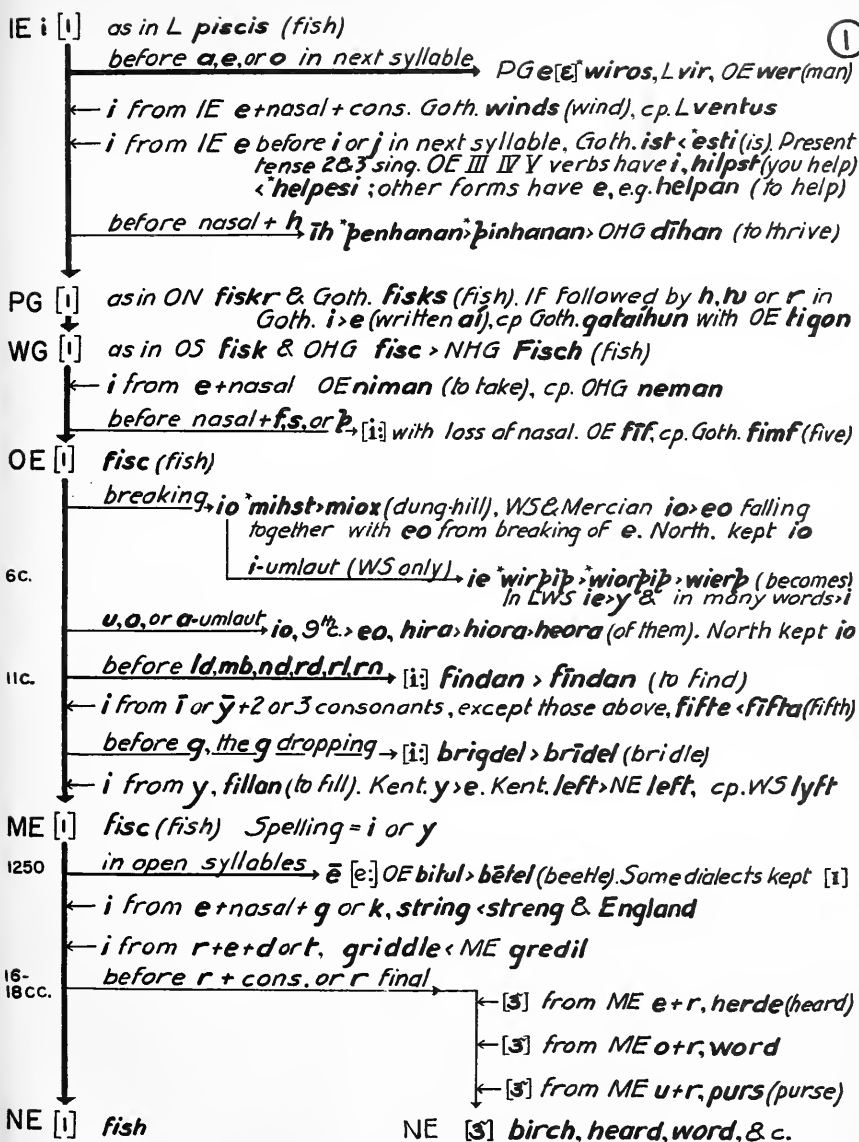
ABBREVIATIONS

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	< <i>comes from</i>
	> <i>gives</i>

PRONUNCIATION KEY

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[ɑ:]	"	a	"	father
[æ]	"	a	"	hat
[æ:]	the	above	sound	prolonged
[ai]	like	i	in	ice
[au]	"	ou	"	house
[e]	"	e	"	set
[e:]	"	ai	"	fair
[e]	"	a	"	fate
[ei]	"	a	"	ale
[i]	"	i	"	sit
[i:]	"	e	"	be
[iu]	"	u	"	mute
[o]	"	o	"	vocation
[o:]	"	o	"	note
[ou]	"	o	"	go
[u]	"	u	"	pull
[u:]	"	oo	"	pool
[y]	"	ü	"	G. müssen
[y:]	"	üh	"	G. kühn
[ə]	"	a	"	Cuba
[ɔ:]	"	au	"	audacious
[ɔ:]	"	aw	"	awe
[ɜ]	"	i	"	birch
[ʌ]	"	u	"	but



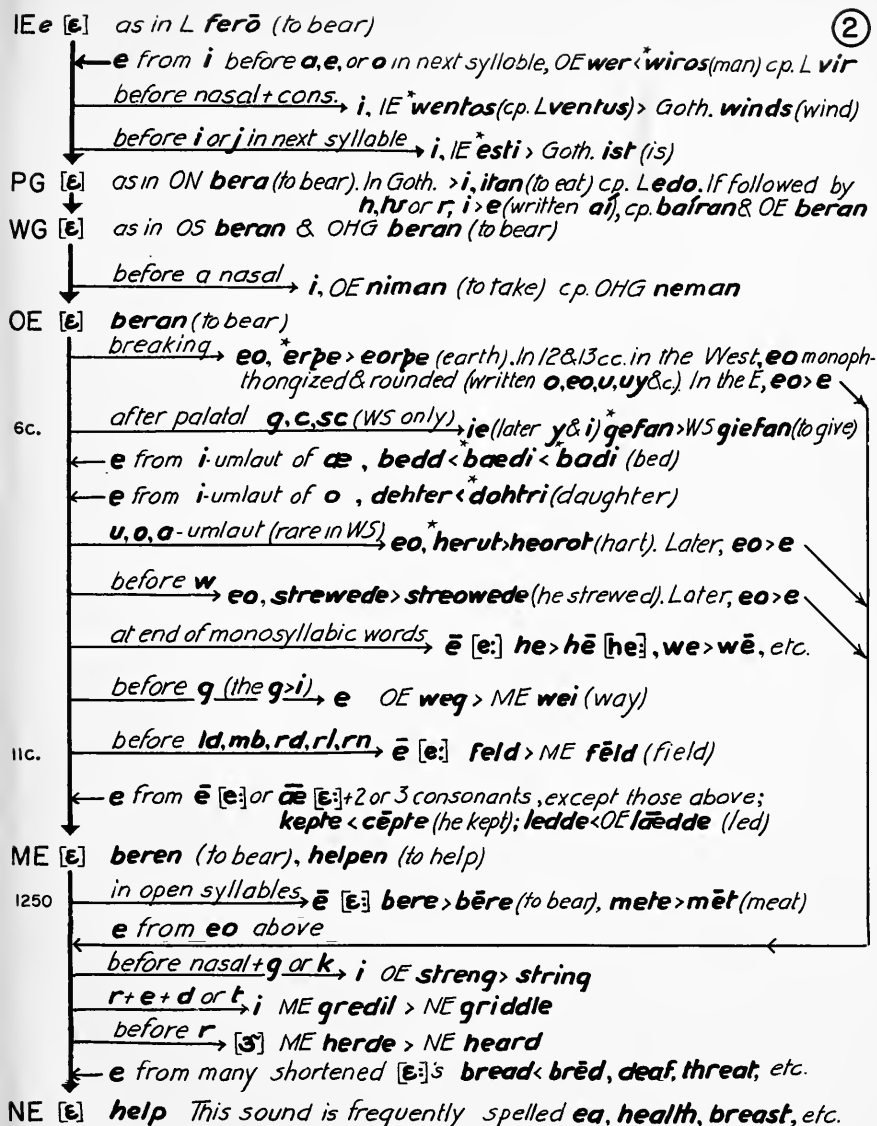
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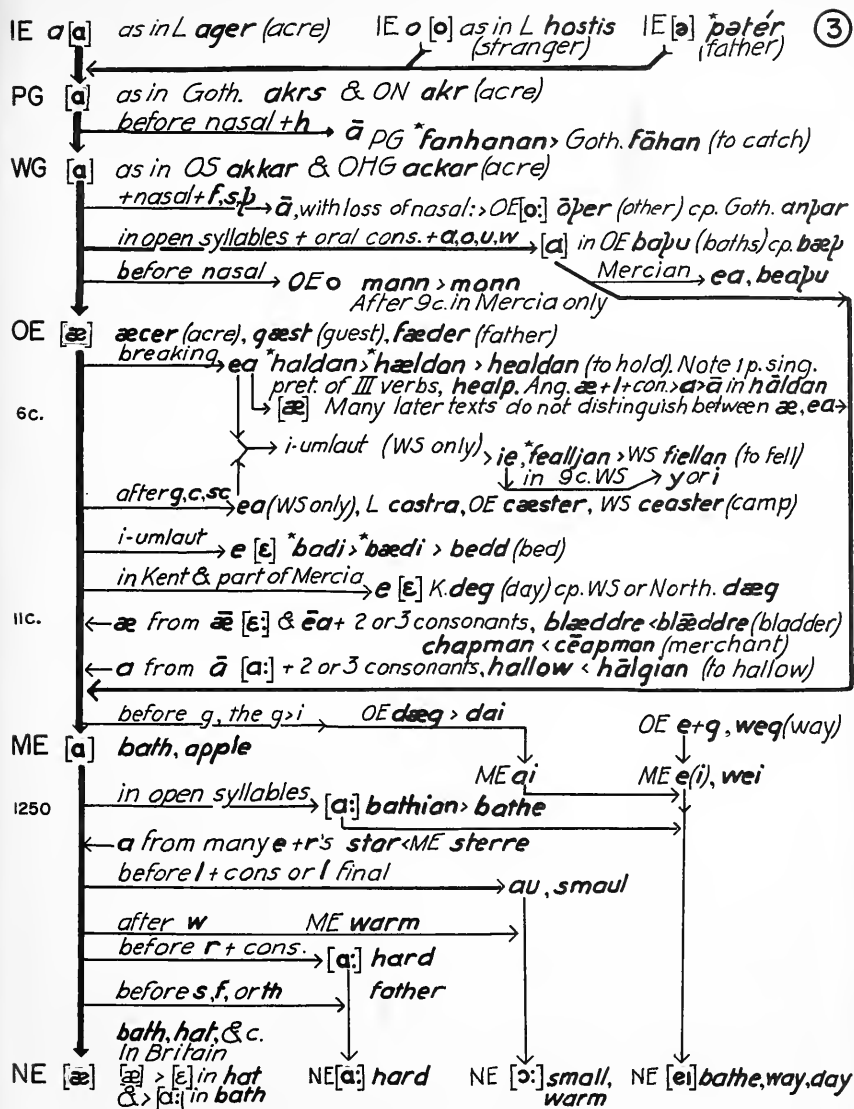
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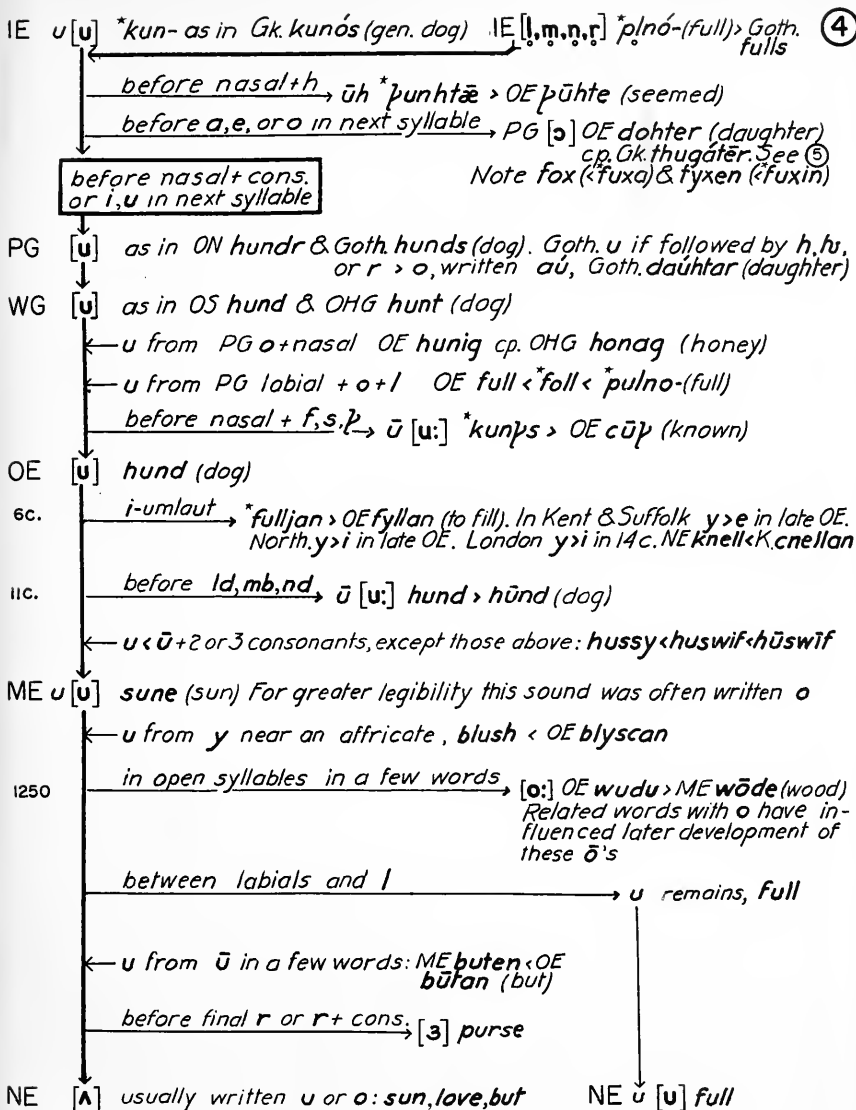
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IE **u** [u] as in Gk. *thugátēr* (daughter)

before nasal + cons. or *i, u* in next syllable →

remained [u]
OE *hund* < **kun-*
See ④

before **a, e, o** in next syllable

PG **o** [ɔ] as in ON *o*, **dohter* > *dóttir* (daughter). In Goth. *o*, (written *au* if followed by *h, hv* or *r*: *doúhtar* (daughter); otherwise PG *o* > Goth. *u*, cp. *hulpans* & OE *geholpen* (helped). Note that IE *u* was sole source of PG *o*, IE *o* having become PG *a*. See ③

WG [ɔ] as in OS *dohter* & OHG *tohter* (daughter)

before a nasal → **u**, OE *hunig* cp. OHG *honag* (honey)

labial + *o + l* → **u** PG **fol* > OE *full*

OE **o** [ɔ]. *dohtor* (daughter), *pott* (pot)

6c. seeming *i*-umlaut (not in North) → **e** [ɛ] **dohtri* (dative) > *dehter*. This is not real umlaut, for PG *o* existed only when *a, o* or *e* followed. These *e*'s came from levelling & analogy. Dative **duhtri* > *dyhter*. **dohtri* was levelled < nom. *dohtor*

← **o** from *a* + nasal, *monn* < *mann* (man). After 9c. in Mercia only.

11c. before *ld, mb, nd, rd* → **ō** [o:] *hord* > *hōrd* (hoard)

← **o** < *ō* + 2 or 3 consonants, except those above: *softe* < *sōfte* (soft)

ME **o** [ɔ] *oxe* (ox), *pot*

1250 in open syllables → **ō** [ɔ:] See ⑧
hopa > *hōpe*

before *ng* → **ō** [ɔ:] *long* > *lōng* →

o + r → **ō** [ɔ:] *north* > *nōrth* →

NE **o** [a] *ox*, *pot* & c. Note use of [ɔ] in Gt. Britain. [ɔks] [pɒt]

ME [au] < OE *a + g* or *f* + back vowel, *sawe* < *sagu* (saw); *hawk* < *havok* (hawk)

← < *a + l* + cons. or *l* final, *small*

← < *a* after *w*, *warm*

NE [ɔ:] *hawk*, *saw*, *warm*

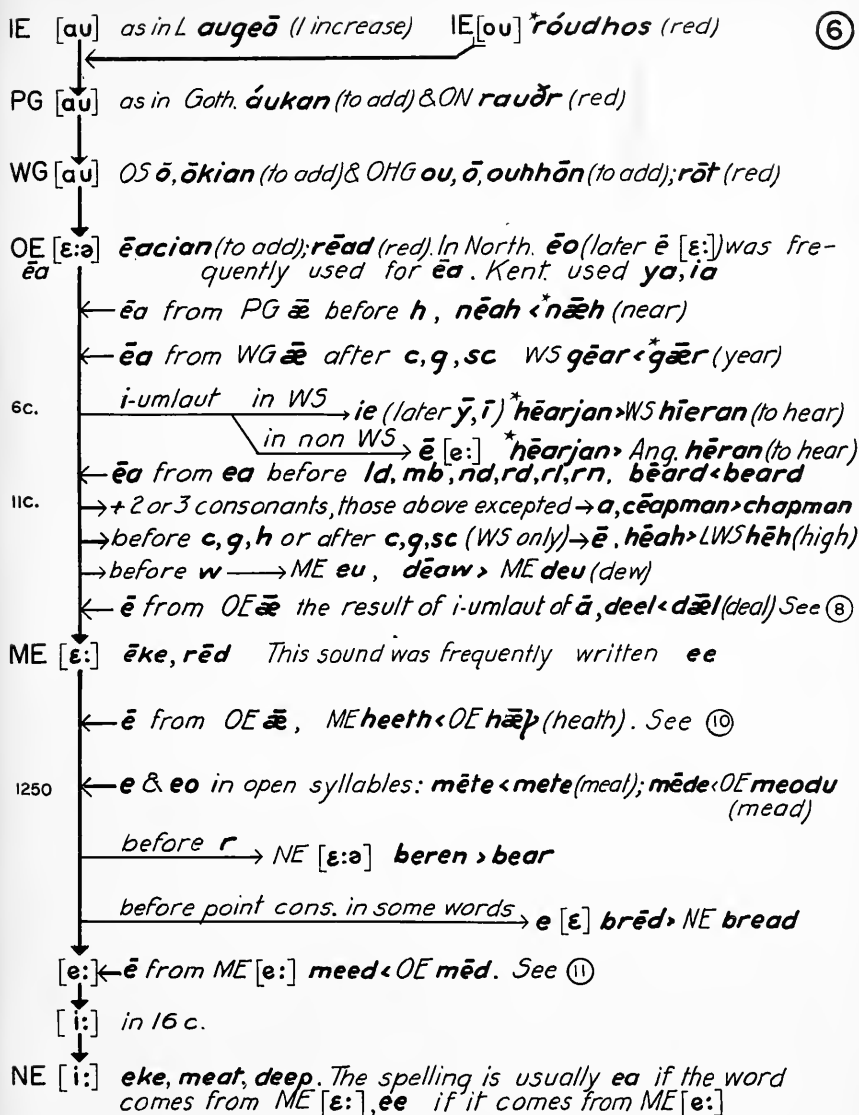
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IE [eu] as in Gk. *geúō* (I give a taste of)

PG [iu] as in Goth. *kiusiþ* (he chooses)
 before *i, j, or u* in next syllable
 PG [eu] **keusan* (to choose)
 → OHG *iū kiusit* (he chooses)
 → ON *ȳ kyss* (he chooses)
 → OS *iū kiusid* (he chooses)
 → ON *jō kjōsa* (to choose)
 → OHG *iō kiozan* (to choose)
 → OS *iō kiozan* (to choose)

OE [e:ɔ] *cēosan* (to choose)
 In North. *ēo* > *ēa*: in Kent & Mercia *ēo* > *iō*

OE [i:ɔ] **kīosiþ* (he chooses)

↙ *iō* from *ī* broken before *h, ht.*
līoh < PG **lih* (lend thou); but
ī did not break in Ang., where
lih remained

← *iō* from breaking of *ī*.
 OE *pēon* < **pīhon*
 IIC. ← *eo* before *ld, mb, nd, rg.*
rl, rn: *ēorl* < *eorl* (earl)

→ i-umlaut (WS only) *iē* **kīosiþ* > *cīesþ*
 (he chooses)

← *eo* + *h, l, or r* + vowel
sēon < *seohan* (to see)

in North. *iō* remains. Cp. North.
þīostro (darkness) with
 Mercian *þēostru*

+ 2 or 3 cons.
 except those above → *eo* > ME *e*
þēofþ > NE *theft*

before *w* → *ēu, iū, trēowe* >
trēue (true)

[e:ɔ] *cēoseþ* (he chooses)

ME [e:] *deep* (OE *dēop*), *meed* (OE *mēd*)

[e:] from IE *ēi*. See (11)

1250 ↙ *ē* from *i* in open syllables *bētel* < OE *bitul* (beetle)

before *r* final or *r* + vowel → NE [i:ə] *here, year, &c.*

← [e:] from OE *ǣ* [ɛ:], *hǣþ* & OE *ē* [ɛ:ə], *ēke* See (10) (6)

NE [i:] *meed, he, deep, heath* &c. [e:] > [i:] after ME [i:] had diphthongized to [ai]. See (9). NE [i:] is usually spelled *ea* if the origin is OE *ǣ*, *ee* if the origin is [e:].

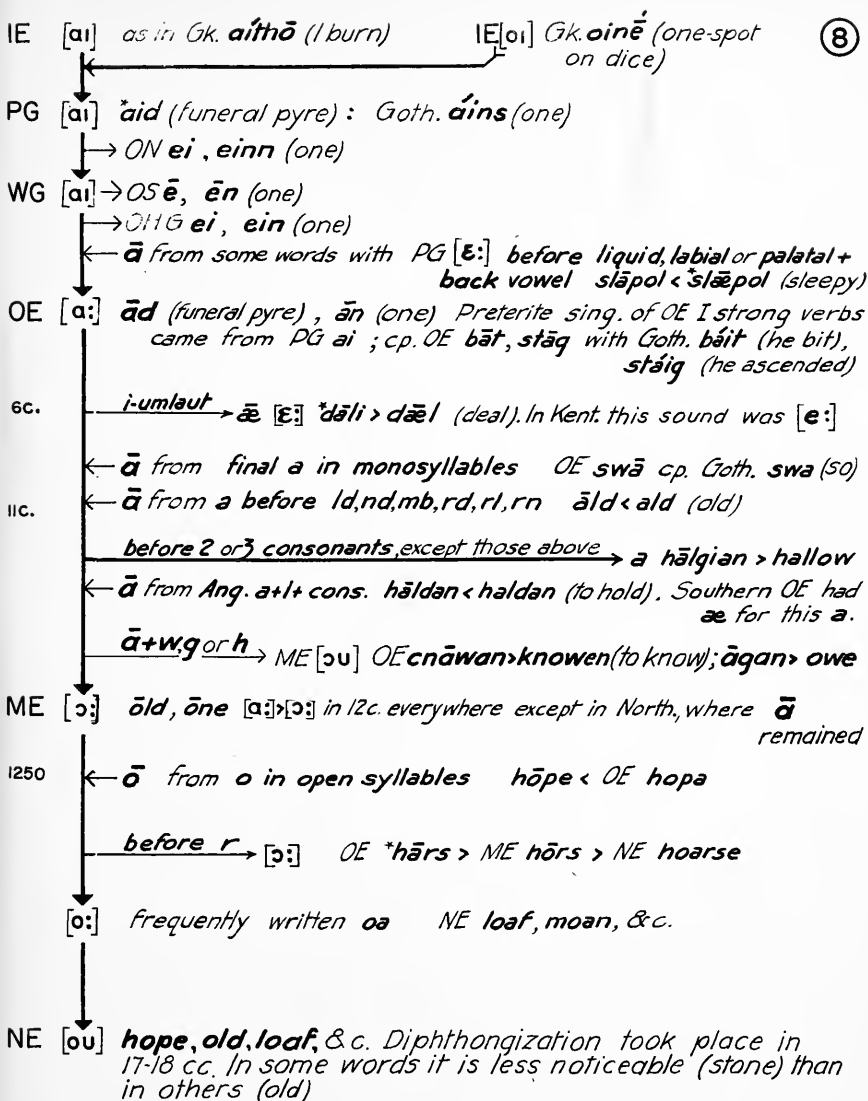
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PRONUNCIATION KEY

[a]	like	o	in	not, fodder
[a:]	"	a	"	father
[æ]	"	a	"	hat
[æ:]	the	above	sound	prolonged
[ai]	like	i	in	ice
[au]	"	ou	"	house
[e]	"	e	"	set
[e:]	"	ai	"	fair
[ɛ]	"	a	"	fate
[ei]	"	a	"	ale
[i]	"	i	"	sit
[i:]	"	e	"	be
[iu]	"	u	"	mute
[o]	"	o	"	vocation
[o:]	"	o	"	note
[ou]	"	o	"	go
[u]	"	u	"	pull
[u:]	"	oo	"	pool
[y]	"	ü	"	<i>G. müssen</i>
[y:]	"	üh	"	<i>G. kühn</i>
[ə]	"	a	"	Cuba
[ɔ]	"	au	"	audacious
[ɔ:]	"	aw	"	awe
[ɜ]	"	i	"	birch
[ʌ]	"	u	"	but

SIGNS * *conjectured form*
 < *comes from*
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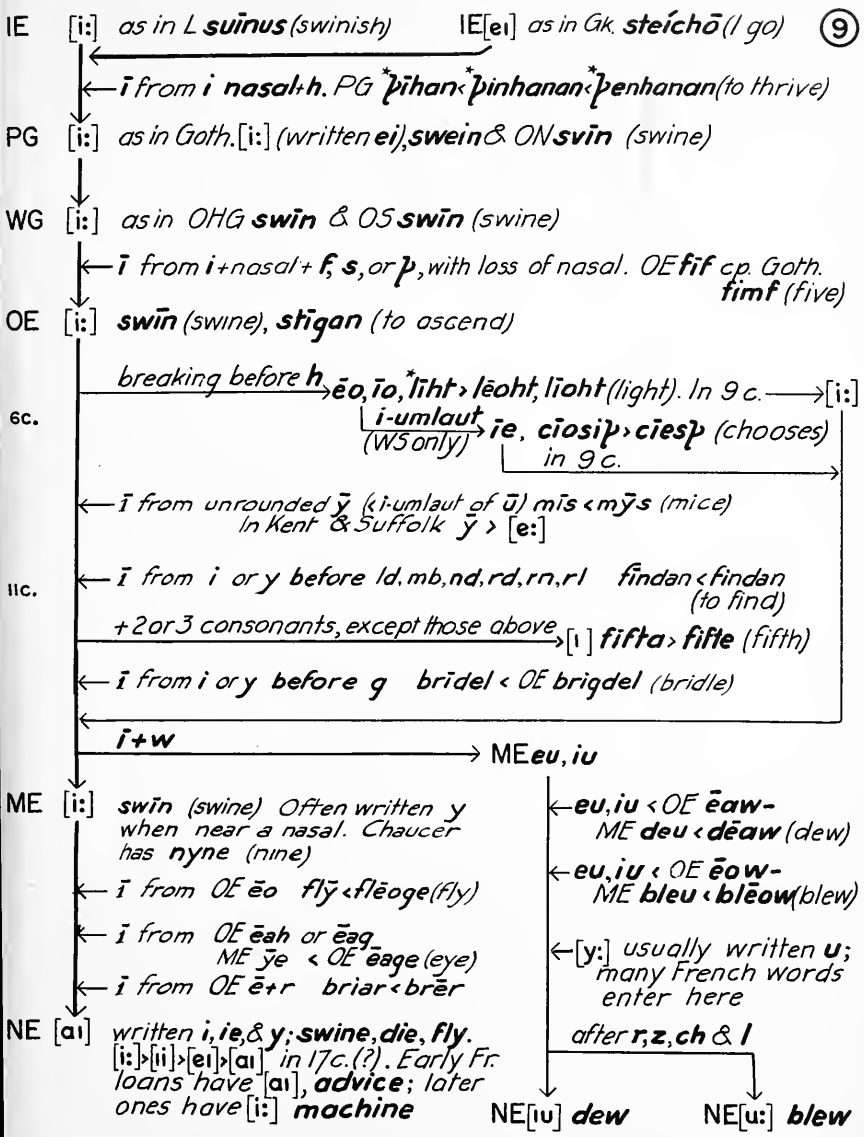
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PRONUNCIATION KEY

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[æ:]	the	above	sound prolonged	
[ai]	like	i	in	ice
[au]	"	ou	"	house
[ɛ]	"	e	"	set
[ɛ:]	"	ai	"	fair
[e]	"	a	"	fate
[ei]	"	a	"	ale
[i]	"	i	"	sit
[i:]	"	e	"	be
[iu]	"	u	"	mute
[o]	"	o	"	vocation
[o:]	"	o	"	note
[ou]	"	o	"	go
[u]	"	u	"	pull
[u:]	"	oo	"	pool
[y]	"	ü	"	G. <i>müssen</i>
[y:]	"	üh	"	G. <i>kühn</i>
[ə]	"	a	"	Cuba
[ɔ]	"	au	"	audacious
[ɔ:]	"	aw	"	awe
[ɜ]	"	i	"	birch
[ʌ]	"	u	"	but



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PRONUNCIATION KEY

[a]	like	o in	not, fodder
[a:]	"	a "	father
[æ]	"	a "	hat
[æ:]	the above	sound	prolonge
[ai]	like	i in	ice
[au]	"	ou "	house
[ɛ]	"	e "	set
[ɛ:]	"	ai "	fair
[e]	"	a "	fate
[ei]	"	a "	ale
[i]	"	i "	sit
[i:]	"	e "	be
[iu]	"	u "	mute
[o]	"	o "	vocation
[o:]	"	o "	note
[ou]	"	o "	go
[u]	"	u "	pull
[u:]	"	oo "	pool
[y]	"	ü "	G. müssen
[y:]	"	üh "	G. kühn
[ə]	"	a "	Cuba
[ɔ]	"	au "	audacious
[ɔ:]	"	aw "	awe
[ɜ]	"	i "	birch
[ʌ]	"	u "	but

E ē [ɛ:] as in Gk. **mēn** (month). Some texts label this sound ē² or ȳ and call it open or slack ē. ⑩

PG **ǣ** [ɛ:] or [æ:] See comment on OE **ǣ** below

→ Goth. [e:] **mēna** (moon), **ētum** (we ate), cp. L **ēdimus**. This [ɛ:] and PG [e:] fell together in Goth. See ⑪

→ ON **ā**, **māne** (moon); **ātum** (we ate)

WG [a:] as in OS **māno**, **ātun** & OHG **māno** (moon); **āzum** (we ate)

+ a liquid, labial or palatal + back vowel → OE **ā**, ***slǣpol** > **slāpol** (sleepy)

before a nasal → **ō**, ***mǣnoþ** > OE **mōnaþ** (month)

OE **ǣ** [ɛ:] or [æ:] **ǣton** (we ate), **sǣ** (sea). The pronunciation of OE **ǣ** [ɛ:] is open to question. Many authorities prefer a lower (more open) sound like the [æ] of "hat" or "harry" prolonged [æ:]

breaking before **h** in WS → **ēa**, ***nǣh** > **nēah** (near)

in Ang. & Kent → [e:] **ēton** (we ate)

in WS after palatal **g, c**, or **sc** → **ēa**, ***gǣr** > **gēar** WS (year)

6c.

i-umlaut → **īe**, ***cēasi** > **cīese** (cheese)

← **ǣ** < i-umlaut of **ā**, **dǣl** < ***dāli** (deal)

← **ǣ** < **æ + g + cons**, **sǣde** < **sægde** (he said)

11c.

before 2 or 3 consonants → **a** or **e**, OE **blǣddre** > **bladder**
OE **lǣdde** > **ledde** (led)

ME [ɛ:] **heeth** (heath), **deel** (deal), **see** (sea), [ɛ:] was usually written **ee**. The raising of ME [ɛ:] > [e:] is given in full on ⑥

← **ē** from ME [e:], **meed** < OE **mēd**. See ⑦

[e:]

[i:] in 16 c.

NE

[i:] **heath**, **sea**, &c. The spelling is usually **ea** if the word comes from ME [ɛ:], **ee** if it comes from ME [e:], **meed**. See ⑦

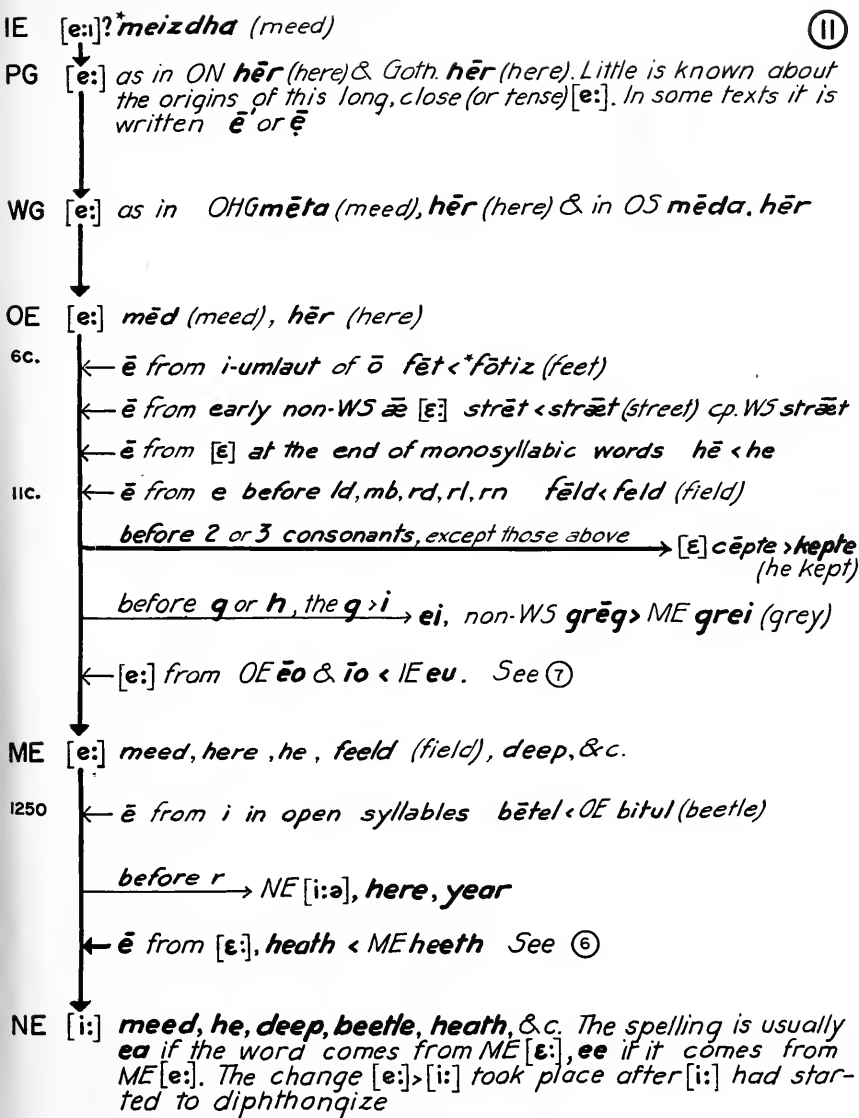
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PRONUNCIATION KEY

[a]	like	o	in	not, fodder
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[ai]	like	i	in	ice
[au]	"	ou	"	house
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[e:]	"	ai	"	fair
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[ɜ]	"	i	"	birch
[ʌ]	"	u	"	but

IE \bar{o} [o:] as in Gk. *pōs* (foot) IE \bar{a} [a:] as in L. *māter* (mother) ⑫

PG [ō:] as in Goth. *fōtus* (foot) & ON *fōtr* (foot), *mōþir* (mother)

WG [ō:] as in OS *fōt* (foot), *mōdar* (mother)

→ OHG *uo*, *muoter* (mother); *fuoz* (foot) > NHG *ū*, *Füss*

i-umlaut → MHG *üe* > NHG *ü*, *Füsse* (feet)

← \bar{o} < PG \bar{a} (< IE *a* + nasal + *h*), OE *fōn* cp. Goth. *fāhan* (to catch)

← \bar{o} < WG \bar{a} + nasal, OE *mōnaþ* cp. OHG *mānot* (month)

← \bar{o} < WG *a* + nasal + *s, f*, or *þ*, OE *gōs* cp. OHG *gans* (goose)

OE [o:] *fōt* (foot), *mōdor* (mother), *fōn* (to catch)

6c. *i*-umlaut → [e:] PG **fōtiz* > OE *fēt* (feet). This sound-change had an intermediate stage, *ōē*, which was retained in, & was typical of, Ang. & Kent. Ang. *fōet* (feet)

11c. ← \bar{o} from *o* before *ld, mb, nd, rd, rl, rn* *hōrd* < *hord* (hoard)
+ 2 or 3 consonants, except those above → *o*, *sōfte* > *softe* (soft)

← \bar{o} from *w* + \bar{a} , *swoop* < OE *swāpan*

before *h* → ME *ū*, OE *plōh* > ME *plūh* (plough)

ME [o:] *fōt*, *swoop*. Often written, *oo* in ME & NE, [o:] was a tense (close) vowel, recorded \bar{o} or $\bar{ō}$ in some texts. The other ME \bar{o} (from OE \bar{a} ; see ⑧) was an open (slack) vowel, sometimes recorded as \bar{o}^2 or $\bar{ō}$. This sound is usually spelled *oa* in NE

1250 ← \bar{o} < *u* in open syllables in a few words, *wōde* < OE *wudu* (wood); *dōre* < OE *durū* (door); *lōve* < OE *lufu*. Related words with short vowels have played havoc (by analogy) with the later development of these \bar{o} 's

before *r* → NE [ɔ:] *dōre* > NE *door*

irregularly near labials

+ *k* & irregularly before *d & t* → *u* > [ʌ], *blood*; *flood*

→ *u*, *rook* < OE *hrōc*; *foot*

← < ME \bar{u} + *w* or after labials, NE *droop* < *drūp*; NE *wound* < ME *wūnd*

NE [u:] *swoop*, *droop*, *wound*. The [o:] > [u:] in 15-16 cc.

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[ɜ]	"	i	"	birch
[ʌ]	"	u	"	but

IE \bar{u} [u:] as in L *pūteō* (I stink)

← \bar{u} from IE *u* + nasal + *h* OE *þūhte* (it seemed) < PG **þunhtā*

PG [u:] as in Goth. *fūls*, *hūs* & ON *füll* (foul), *hūs* (house)

WG [u:] as in OS & OHG *hūs* (house)

← \bar{u} from *u* + nasal + *f, s* or *þ*, OE *cūþ* < PG **kunþs* (known)

OE [u:] *fūl* (foul), *þūhte* (it seemed), *hūs* (house)

6c. \bar{u} from *u* + nasal + *f, s* or *þ* → *ī* **mūsiz* > *mȳs* (mice). In the Southeast of England, including Kent, this [y:] > [e:] in 9c. Kent *mēs* (mice)
unrounding → *ī*, *mȳs* > *mīs* (mice). Unrounding in 10c. in North; as late as 15c. in parts of the Midlands

← \bar{u} from *u* before *ld, lh, mb, nd, rh* *hūnd* < *hund* (dog)

11c. + 2 or 3 consonants, except those above → *u*, *hūs wīf*, *hus wīf* > *hussif*, *hussy* (housewife)

← \bar{u} from OE *ōg*, *ōh* ME *plūh* < *plōh* (plough)

ME [u:] *foul*, *hous* (house)

before labials or after *w*

16c. [ou] \bar{u} remains, NE *droop*

[au]

+ final *r* → [auə] NE *hour*, *flour*

before *r* + cons. → [ɔ:]

ME *mūrnen* > NE *mourn*

NE [au] *foul*, *mouse*, *hound*

NE [ɔ:] *mourn*
See ③

← \bar{u} from OE [o:]
See ⑫

NE [u:] *droop*, *stoop*

14

DIFFERENCES OF OE DIALECTS

Because practically all literary texts have come down to us in the West Saxon dialect, examples of non-WS usage are relatively scarce. Many of the following examples are constructed, - not found in texts.

CELTIC
Solway Firth

- 1 *āll* (all)
- 2 *beaþu* (baths)
- 3 *dehter*
- 4 *dēap* (deep)
- 5 *dæg* (day)
- 6 *cnyllan* (to knell), *mȳs* (mice)
- 7 *cæster* (camp)
- 8 *gefan* (to give)
- 9 *gelēafan* (to believe)
- 10 *cīosþ* (chooses)

NORTHUMBRIAN

Northumbrian is identified by its treatment of

I i-umlaut of *Wū* o

See words marked •3

II PG eu

See words marked •4

CELTIC

- 1 *āll* (all)
- 2 *beaþu* (baths)
- 3 *dehter* (dative of daughter)
- 4 *dīop* (deep)
- 5 *dæg* & sometimes *deg* (day)
- 6 *cnyllan* (to knell), *mȳs* (mice)
- 7 *cæster* (camp)
- 8 *gefan* (to give)
- 9 *gelēafan* (to believe)
- 10 *cīosþ* (chooses)

MERCIAN

Anglian (Mercian & Northumbrian) is identified by its treatment of

I *Wūat* + cons. See wds. marked •1

II i-umlaut of *Wūa*. See words marked •2

R. Severn

WEST SAXON

KENTISH

R. Thames

West Saxon is identified by its treatment of

I *æ* after *g, c, sc* See words marked •7

II *e* after *g, c, sc* See words marked •8

III i-umlaut of *ēa* See wds. •9

IV i-umlaut of *īo* See wds. •10

Kentish is identified by its treatment of

I *Wūa* See words marked •5

II i-umlaut of *u* & *ū* See words marked •6

- 1 *eall* (all)
- 2 *baþu* (baths)
- 3 *dehter* (dative of daughter)
- 4 *dēop* (deep)
- 5 *dæg* (day)
- 6 *cnyllan* (to knell), *mȳs* (mice)
- 7 *ceaster* (camp)
- 8 *giefan* (to give)
- 9 *geliefan* (to believe)
- 10 *cīesþ* (chooses)

- 1 *eall* (all)
- 2 *baþu* (baths)
- 3 *dehter* (dative of daughter)
- 4 *dīop* (deep)
- 5 *deg* (day)
- 6 *cnellan* (to knell) & *mēs* (mice)
- 7 *cæster* (camp)
- 8 *gefan* (to give)
- 9 *gelēafan* (to believe)
- 10 *cīosþ* (chooses)

DIFFERENCES OF ME DIALECTS

Differentiation of Middle English dialects by accidence, vocabulary, & consonant changes is often easier than by vowel changes. Only a few characteristic vowels are given here. Variations within a district were numerous; boundaries of districts were not exact.

Firth of Forth

NORTHERN

Solway Firth

- 1 m[ɑ:]r, later m[ɛ:]r (more)
- 2 s[y:]th (sooth)
- 3 f[i:]r (fire)
- 4 th[ɑ:]t (that)
- 5 h[ɛ:]r (to hear)

Northern is identified by its treatment of

I OE [ɑ:] See words marked •1

II OE [ɔ:] See words marked •2

Humber Estuary

MIDLAND

Midland texts show the great variety of pronunciations in this district. Forms used in the East Midlands were most influential & are considered normal ME

- 1 m[ɔ:]r (more)
- 2 s[ɔ:]th (sooth)
- 3 f[i:]r (fire)
- 4 th[ɑ:]t (that)
- 5 h[ɛ:]r-en (to hear)

London used (1100-1250) an amalgam of Southern OE dialects (WS & Kent). After 1300 London used increasingly the East Midland dialect.

CELTIC

R. Severn

SOUTHWESTERN

Southwestern is identified by its treatment of

I OE [y:] See words marked •3

II OE [i:], a distinctive WS sound
See words marked •5

SOUTHEASTERN

Southeastern (including Kent) is identified by its treatment of

I OE [y:] See words marked •3

II OE [æ] See words marked •4

- 1 m[ɔ:]r (more)
- 2 s[ɔ:]th (sooth)
- 3 f[i:]r (fire)
- 4 th[ɑ:]t (that)
- 5 h[y:]re, or h[i:]re (to hear)

- 1 m[ɔ:]r (more)
- 2 z[ɔ:]th (sooth)
- 3 v[ɛ:]r (fire)
- 4 th[ɛ:]t (that)
- 5 h[ɛ:]re (to hear)

SPECIAL VOWEL RELATIONSHIPS. ABLAUT OR VOWEL GRADATION

The most important manifestation of ablaut is seen in the following (e) set of variations. No one root shows all grades; a hypothetical root (*) is used below for a complete paradigm. Stress = ; place of ablaut = ^

Grade:		Strong, or Normal		Reduced		Zero		Lengthened	
		e	o	a	no sound	e	o		
*Examp.		*fēgs	*fōgs	*fāges	*fāges	*fāges	*fāgs		
IE Examp.		Gk. pētōmai (to fly)	Gk. pētē	Gk. pētēs	Gk. pētēs	Gk. pētēs	Gk. pētēs		
		L. pēdis (foot)	Gk. pōdōs	Gk. pōdōs	Gk. pōdōs	Gk. pōdōs	Gk. pōdōs		
		→ +i → ei	oi	i +	i +	i +	i +		
		Gk. hēlpō	hēlpō (have left)	hēlpō	hēlpō	hēlpō	hēlpō		
		→ +u → eu	ou	u +	u +	u +	u +		
		Gk. pēthōmai	pēthōmai	pēthōmai	pēthōmai	pēthōmai	pēthōmai		
		Gk. pēthōmai	pēthōmai	pēthōmai	pēthōmai	pēthōmai	pēthōmai		
		speūdō	speūdō (hasten)	speūdō	speūdō	speūdō	speūdō		
P Gmc. Examp.		*fēsti-	*fēsti-	*fēsti-	*fēsti-	*fēsti-	*fēsti-		
from Goth.		biudan (bid)	biudan (bid)	biudan (bid)	biudan (bid)	biudan (bid)	biudan (bid)		
		steigan	steigan	steigan	steigan	steigan	steigan		
		stāig	stāig	stāig	stāig	stāig	stāig		
		bāu	bāu	bāu	bāu	bāu	bāu		
		IE	IE	IE	IE	IE	IE		
		āhsgs	āhsgs	āhsgs	āhsgs	āhsgs	āhsgs		
		mat	mat	mat	mat	mat	mat		
		usmēt	usmēt	usmēt	usmēt	usmēt	usmēt		
		mātan	mātan	mātan	mātan	mātan	mātan		
		būden	būden	būden	būden	būden	būden		
		drīfan	drīfan	drīfan	drīfan	drīfan	drīfan		
		drāif	drāif	drāif	drāif	drāif	drāif		
		drīfen (driven)	drīfen (driven)	drīfen (driven)	drīfen (driven)	drīfen (driven)	drīfen (driven)		
		fōtus (foot)	fōtus (foot)	fōtus (foot)	fōtus (foot)	fōtus (foot)	fōtus (foot)		
		fōr (foot)	fōr (foot)	fōr (foot)	fōr (foot)	fōr (foot)	fōr (foot)		

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